

The Church's Debt to the Bible Society

THE paragraphs given below are selected from an address given by Rev. John McNeill, B.A., at the annual meeting of the Upper Canada Bible Society last winter. Referring to the Bible Society, Mr. McNeill said:—

"Here, then, we have a great organization prosecuting its work throughout the whole wide world. And when you attempt to sum up its value and the debt we owe to it, there are at least three distinct lines along which its service is very clearly marked.

A DENOMINATIONAL ALLY.

In the wide field of denominational expansion every Protestant denomination has found in the Bible Society every-where one of its strongest allies, and in that respect alone we are under a debt we can never fully repay.

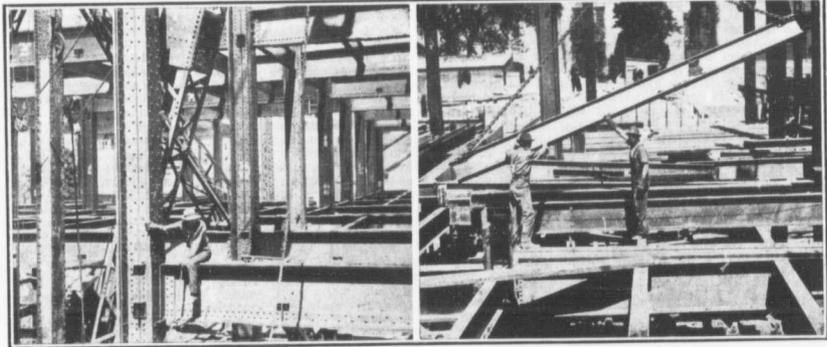
We are here, to-night, I suppose, re-

in every part of the world are dependent upon this same Society for all their Scriptures, as they try to break down the unbelief of men. Let me remind the Anglican people that their missionaries also throughout the whole world are drawing the supplies of their Scriptures from this Society in no less than 180 different tongues and the missionaries supported by the Anglican Church of Canada are nearly all dependent upon this Society for the very weapons with which they carry on the warfare of Christ.

We have not begun to appreciate the fact, that standing at our backs there is this great Society with splendid resources and generous spirit, constantly ministering to the need of the Protestant denominations of this land. It has saved us decades of time so far as preparation for our work is concerned. It has saved us thousands of dollars so far as our equipment is concerned, and time

things I have mentioned the Bible Society is helping to stem two very dangerous tendencies that are threatening the life of our Canadian people at the present time—the tendency of materialism on the one hand and the tendency of sectionalism on the other.

It should not be a matter of surprise that at the present time there is a strong tendency towards a materialistic spirit among our people, for we have suddenly come out of great poverty into great wealth. The Canadian people are like campers who have pitched their tent on unknown ground, and wakened in the morning to find that their tent pegs were driven into soil that was literally loaded with silver and gold. With all our great resources in forest, in field and in mine, with the rapid expansion of values, with the unparalleled opportunities to make fortunes, and make them rapidly and easily, it is not to be wondered at if men



PLACING A GIRDER.

HOISTING FIVE TONS OF STEEL.

presenting nearly every Protestant denomination, and we cannot blind our eyes to this fact, that we are hopelessly in debt to this splendid Society, which is so supremely the servant of us all. I often think it would be a very valuable thing if we might call the roll of all the Protestant denominations, and let them acknowledge, as they would gladly do, the service you have rendered. Let our Baptist friends, for instance, remember that their missionaries throughout the whole world are drawing their supplies of the Scriptures from this Society in no less than 64 different tongues. And let the Baptist Churches of Canada remember that all their missionaries, sent forth and supported both at home and abroad, are dependent upon this Society for the very weapons with which they do their work.

Let the Methodist people remember that their missionaries throughout the world are receiving from the Society their supplies of the Scriptures in ninety-one different tongues. And let the Methodist Church of Canada remember that their missionaries, from the men who are laboring abroad in the Orient to the men who are working here among the Italians in Toronto, are dependent on the same Society for the very weapons with which they fight the battles of the Lord.

Let our Presbyterian friends remember that their missionaries throughout the world are drawing their supplies of the Scriptures from this Society in no less than 130 different tongues, and the missionaries sent and supported by them

and again it has brought us a free gift that it was beyond our power to purchase. Let us suppose for a moment that the Bible houses of the Society all over the world were closed against us; that every translator was taken from his work, that the wheels of every press were stopped, that every request for a Bible was refused. There is not one Missionary Society that would not be instantly crippled, and almost hopelessly incapacitated for the time being in the prosecution of their missionary enterprise.

A NATIONAL ASSET.

But it is not alone merely as an ally of our denominational expansion that we recognize the value of the Bible Society. It is one of the greatest assets in our life as a Canadian people. It is not alone, that the Bible Society has fifty colporteurs and fifteen Bible women moving as missionary forces in the most needy and out of the way places. It is not merely the fact that it is publishing and circulating thirty-four Diglots of the Scriptures, where the English and the foreign language are in parallel columns for the use of the immigrants, so that they may not only learn English, but learn the Word of God at the same time. It is not merely because it is meeting requests for the Scriptures in 110 different languages for the heterogeneous peoples that are crowding through our gates. It is not merely because the Society is standing at the back of all the churches and enabling them to carry through their great work, but in the very doing of the

to-day are beginning to think that life consisteth in the abundance of those things that a man may possess.

We need to learn this lesson as never before that men are more than things, the producer is more than a product, life is more than wheat, and character is more than lumber and land and real estate, for it is righteousness that exalteth a nation. And I have no hesitation in saying that if that materialistic spirit is ever going to be checked, this can only be done as the breath of the supernatural steals into all this fabric of our Canadian life. And when you inquire where that supernatural spirit is to come from, and the agency through which it is to come, your mind instinctively and instantly turns to the Word of God. There is a supernatural fact in the midst of our life. It is a supernatural revelation; it brings a supernatural message. It speaks of a supernatural person, it points to a supernatural life, and it secures supernatural results in the hearts of men.

The second danger that threatens our Canadian life is the danger of sectionalism. The Report presses that all the more strongly upon our minds when we remember that the Bible Society furnishes the Scriptures in no less than 110 different tongues within the bounds of our Dominion. What does that mean? It means that we have here within our own borders a great heterogeneous mass of people. Our Canadian type has not yet been finally formed. He is to be created out of all the types of life that are coming to us. Our task is to fuse and unify